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Australia's unemployment rate increased to 5.2 per cent in February 2012

Australia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 5.2 per cent in February, as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

The number of people employed decreased by 15,400 to 11,444,000 in February. The decrease in employment was driven by decreased part-time employment, down 15,400 people to 3,380,400, while full-time employment remained at 8,063,600. The decrease in seasonally adjusted part-time employment was driven by a decrease in female part-time employment.

The number of people unemployed increased by 16,400 people to 632,200.

The labour force participation rate decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 65.2 per cent.

The ABS monthly aggregate hours worked series showed an increase in February, up 21.6 million hours to 1,616.6 million hours.

The seasonally adjusted underemployment rate was 7.3 per cent in February 2012. Combined with the unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent, the latest estimate of total seasonally adjusted labour force underutilisation was 12.5 per cent in February. For more information on underemployment and underutilisation, please refer to the article 'Understanding Labour Force,' which is published every month in *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0).

In this month's feature article '*Exploring Labour Force data on joblessness*', the ABS explores alternative measurements of 'joblessness' in the Australian labour market. The official unemployment rate provides a 'snapshot' of unemployment that is useful for economic analysis and international comparisons, but the ABS also collects further data around the more social aspects of 'joblessness'. These encompass people who are marginally attached to the labour force, such as discouraged job seekers and potential labour force participants who were unavailable during the reference period. The additional data can be combined with the official unemployment figures to construct alternative 'jobless' rates which provide more detailed and alternative perspectives on 'joblessness', potential labour supply and dissatisfaction in the labour force.

More details are in the February 2012 issue of *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0), as well as the upcoming February 2012 issues of *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) and *Labour Force, Australia, Quarterly* (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003), which are both due for release next week on March 15. All three publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website - www.abs.gov.au.

Media note:

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